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Drunk driving is a huge issue in our society, although numbers have gone down since 1987, when the act was adopted by all 50 states. Is this an effect of a higher drinking age, or the effect of efforts to educate people of the dangers in drinking and drunk driving? A study presented in the IACP reports show that in Canada “similar reduction alcohol-related traffic crashes have occurred among young drivers without raising the minimum purchase age” (2). This simply shows that whether the drinking age is 19 or 21, there will be the same amount of accidents. The accidents in the U.S. have declined steadily since 1987 but this is not due to the minimum age limit being raised, it is better education on the subject. There are also programs set up to help prevent drunk driving and to help educate youth about the dangers of drunk driving. Some of these programs include: “Education concerning drunk driving, designated driver programs, increased seat belt and air bag usage, safer automobiles, lower speed limits, and free taxi services from drinking establishments” (3). Society in the United States does not want to take blame for our alcohol problems we would rather just hide behind the law of the minimum age of 21 when they really should be looking for more innovative ways to solve this problem. Professor Engs at Indiana University found that, since the drinking age has been raised to 21 years old, instances involving alcohol have increased 5-10%, these instances include: vomiting after drinking, cutting class after drinking, missing class because of a hangover, getting worse grades because of drinking, and having been in a fight after drinking. After reading this I still find my self asking what good it does to have the drinking age at 21 years old.

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Thus far the legal drinking age is set at 21 years old and still efforts to try and minimize underage drinking falls short. Is the drinking age limit the problem? Many think not and that keeping it at 21 is in fact helping out. In a recent study with Dr. Park college administrator at the University of Colorado, he talks about way to reduce the irresponsible drinking and sheds some light on some statistical information. In these studies he found that 90% of high school students has consumed alcoholic beverages and half of these students drinks regularly. So how do we solve this problem? Dr. Park proposes keeping the law at 21 but to give out some sort of license where conduct can be monitored and controlled, similar to that of a driving license. This would give people under the age of 21 some kind of limited drinking privileges until they are of legal age and to obtain the permit, the person would have to go through alcohol education classes. Dr. Park feels that people act responsibly when they are given responsibility, which makes perfect sense, instead of approaching the problem with a negative punishment he says to give it positive reinforcement. Although Dr. Park may be on to some interesting alternatives, others feel that comparing statistics over the past twenty years prove that having the drinking age at 21 has served some purpose.